UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1906
2 June 1995

F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

+ Secretary-General expresses extreme concern at failure of Bosnian Serbs to release all United Nations hostages; sends Senior Adviser to Zagreb to assess situation.

+ UNPROFOR says it cannot confirm ICRC report that Bosnian Serbs intend to release hostages; NATO aircraft reportedly shot down over northern Bosnia.

+ United Nations launches revised inter-agency appeal for $470 million for humanitarian operations in former Yugoslavia.

+ European Union Troika, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Co-Chairmen of International Conference condemn violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Tajik parties conclude fourth round of talks in Almaty by reaffirming three-month extension of cease-fire.

+ First All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue to be held in Schlaining, Austria, from 3 to 5 June.

+ Economic and Social Council acts on HIV/AIDS Programme and forests panel at resumed organizational session.

+ DPA's Security Council Affairs Division must be given adequate staffing and resources, Council members say.

+ Subcommittee on Small Territories observes Week of Solidarity with Peoples of Colonial Territories.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed extreme concern at the failure of the Bosnian Serb authorities to release unconditionally all United Nations personnel being held hostage. He said there was a pressing need to restore the freedom

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of movement of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), to end the fighting in Sarajevo and other safe areas, and to reconnect utility supplies to the capital.

The Secretary-General announced that he was sending Senior Adviser Chinmaya Gharekhan on an urgent mission to Zagreb tonight. Mr. Gharekhan would assess the situation and support Special Representative Yasushi Akashi's efforts to find solutions to the problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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An International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) representative in Pale today reported that the Bosnian Serbs intended to release detained United Nations personnel within a day or two. However, a United Nations spokesman said the Force had received no direct communication to that effect from the Bosnian Serb authorities, and expressed caution regarding the report. There was a direct line between the authorities in Pale and UNPROFOR in Sarajevo, but it had not been used, he noted.

The spokesman confirmed that UNPROFOR had been holding relatively low-level talks with the Bosnian Serb military authorities to press its demand for the release of the detainees. He stressed that the United Nations was not negotiating with the Bosnian Serbs as that demand was unconditional.

Meanwhile, a United States F-16 jet was reportedly shot down by a surface-to-air missile over northern Bosnia this morning. However, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) did not confirm the cause of the crash. The aircraft was on a surveillance mission as part of Operation "Deny Flight", and not an attack mission.

The situation in Sarajevo remained tense, although the number of firing incidents had decreased from 1,000 yesterday to 700 today, the spokesman continued. UNPROFOR peace-keepers and vehicles were again targeted by the Bosnian Serbs, including attacks on a French observation post and two British armoured personnel carriers.

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The United Nations has launched a revised consolidated inter-agency appeal for $470 million for humanitarian operations in the former Yugoslavia. Some 44 per cent of that target had been met as

of 28 April, leaving a shortfall of $261 million for the rest of the year.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the lead humanitarian agency in the former Yugoslavia, with responsibility for the general mobilization of resources and the coordination of aid activities. The agency has so far received $104 million of the $172 million it needs this year.

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The escalation of violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been condemned by the Troika of the European Union (represented by France, Spain and Germany); the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States; and the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. At a meeting at The Hague on 29 May, they also condemned any hostile act against United Nations personnel. They said that they held the Bosnian Serb authorities accountable for the security of United Nations personnel taken hostage. They also warned that the authorities would bear the consequences if the hostages were not released.

Participants in the meeting strongly urged the Bosnian Serbs to accept the Contact Group plan as a starting-point for negotiations. They agreed on the need to reinforce UNPROFOR, and to give a new impetus to the diplomatic process. They stressed the need for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to recognize Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for the closure of borders to be strengthened. A resolution on sanctions suspension should be finalized in the Security Council, they added.

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The fourth round of inter-Tajik talks has concluded in Almaty, Kazakstan, a United Nations spokesman announced today. He said the Tajik Government and opposition had approved a joint statement reaffirming the three-month extension of the current cease-fire. They had also provided for confidence-building measures relating to prisoners of war and detainees, and the return of refugees and displaced persons.

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The first All-Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue will begin tomorrow in Schlaining, Austria. It is scheduled to last until 5 June. The Dialogue has been facilitated by the Secretary-General.

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While the Dialogue will not address the political status of East Timor -- an issue to be tackled at Ministerial talks -- it should provide a forum for a free and informal exchange of views. The Dialogue will also provide the Secretary-General with ideas for possible discussion at the next round of Ministerial talks in Geneva on 8 July.

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The Economic and Social Council has taken decisions concerning the Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS, the establishment of an intergovernmental panel on forests, and preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. It took those actions, among others, at a resumed organizational session yesterday.

The Council elected as members of the Joint Programme's Coordination Board the following countries: Algeria, Australia, Barbados, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, France, India, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States. It also approved the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc intergovernmental panel on forests. The Commission on Sustainable Development recommended the establishment of the panel to formulate coordinated proposals for action on forests.

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The members of the Security Council have expressed concern about the staffing of the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 31 May, they called for adequate staffing to enable the Council and its committees to function effectively. The members noted that the Council's workload had increased enormously in recent years. Meanwhile, the resources and services made available to the Council in discharging its duties had hardly increased, and had on occasion decreased.

In another development, the Council said the practice of hearing comments by States and organizations concerned during closed meetings of sanctions committees on issues arising from implementation of sanctions regimes should continue. In a note by its President dated 31 May, the Council said the existing procedures followed by those committees should also continue to be respected.

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Hundreds of millions of people gained their freedom and independence in the surge of decolonization following the creation of the United Nations, according to the Chairman of the Special Committee on Decolonization, Eugene Pursso. He made that comment to the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, as it observed the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of all Colonial Territories.

Mr. Pursso went on to say that the task of decolonization remained unfinished and required further determined action. Some people -- mostly those in small island Non-Self-Governing Territories -- had not been able to exercise their right to self-determination.

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